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REMARKS**Specification**

The informalities in the specification identified by the Examiner have been addressed by this amendment.

Claim Objections

Claims 4 and 5 have been corrected to remove the noted informalities.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 103

Claims 1-2, 4-5, and 7 are rejected under U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Varghese et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,560,236 B1) in view of Patel et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,400,950 B1.)

Varghese discloses a network device including a bridge having ports that are partitioned into groups, with a group being associated with a respective virtual network. It permits the bridge to isolate the virtual networks from one another.

Patel concerns an H.323 system. As set out in Col. 1, line 26 - Col. 2, line 15, where a mobile station (MS) uses the H.323 system to route calls, it connects via a Mobile Switching Center (MSC). A Gatekeeper holds a record of each MS connected to respective ports of the MSC and its port number. The IP address of the MSC and the port number enables data to be routed to a particular MS. A Home Location Register (HLR) keeps a record of where an MS is located in the H.323 system. Where reset is required, for example, because the HLR shuts down and restarts, all MSs connected to an MSC, or a group of them, must be deregistered at the Gatekeeper. In one method, each MS is individually deregistered in turn at the Gatekeeper as instructed by the MSC in a series of messages. Using Patel's development, all MSs, or a group of them, can be deregistered by a single message.

Patel is not concerned with Virtual Local Area Networks (VLANs) or bridges. Thus, Applicants disagree with the Examiner's assertion that Varghese and Patel are concerned with the same field of endeavour. Accordingly, it is

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submitted that it is improper to attempt to combine the teachings of these two references in the manner suggested by the Examiner.

However, if for the sake of argument, the teachings of the two references are considered together, claim 1 requires that a multi-bridge is operable to register, upon receiving a data packet by one of at least two ports of a particular set, that the VLAN identified by the identifier of the data packet uses ports of the particular set. As recognized by the Examiner, Varghese does not disclose this feature. Patel is not concerned with a multi-bridge, or ports associated with a multi-bridge, and thus cannot remedy Varghese's deficiency in this regard. Thus, for this reason at least, Varghese taken with Patel does not render the present invention as claimed in claim 1 obvious.

Additionally, Patel is mainly concerned with deregistering multiple MSs associated with a particular MSC using a messaging mechanism, as shown, for example, in Figure 5 of Patel. It requires a specifically defined message sent from the MSC to the Gatekeeper to implement an instruction sent to the MSC by the HLR to deregister the MSs. This message is a modified URQ message. Following deregistration, each MS must individually re-register by giving the MSC a location update. This procedure is not concerned with a VLAN, but with individual MSs using a H.323 system to route calls over it. There is nothing to suggest that VLAN identifiers might be registered when a data packet is received at a multi-bridge. In contrast to the present invention, Patel discloses a system in which messaging protocols are used to achieve its aim.

Furthermore, the procedures advocated by Patel involve significant additional signalling. In the present invention as claimed in claim 1, registration is achieved using information derived from a data packet. Additional signalling is not necessary, and this is an advantage compared to the prior art solution described in the introduction to the present specification.

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that claim 1 is patentable over the teachings of Varghese, Patel and any combination thereof. Similar reasoning applies to claims, claim 4 and 7, which accordingly are also patentable over

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these references. The other claims are directly or indirectly dependent on an allowable claim and for this reason at least are also therefore allowable.

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested. If the Examiner has any questions or feels that a telephone conversation would be helpful, please contact the Applicant's undersigned attorney at 908 582 7584.

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If any additional fees are due with respect to this amendment, please charge them to Deposit Account No. 12-2325.

Respectfully submitted,
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